

REMARKS

Prior to this Amendment and Response, original claims 1-14 were pending in the Application. Herein, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 14 were amended; claim 13 was cancelled, and claim 15 was added. Therefore, upon entry of the Amendment, claims 1-12 and 14-15 will remain pending in the Application. Entry of this Amendment, reconsideration, and allowance of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 4 and 10 contain allowable subject matter. As suggested by the Examiner, each of these claims has been rewritten in independent format including all of the limitations of the base claim (there being no intervening claims).

Claim Objections

In the Office Action, 4 and 10 were objected to due to their dependence on rejected base claims. Applicants traverse this rejection below, but have also rewritten claims 4 and 10 in independent form as suggested by the Examiner. For these reasons, Applicants believe that this Objection has been overcome.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §112

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, stating that the meaning of the term "*in situ*" is unclear. While the meaning of this recitation is illuminated in paragraph [0036] of the Specification, for clarity Applicants have amended claim 5 in accord with the description in paragraph [0036]. Applicants therefore believe this ground for rejection has been overcome.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 2 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, stating that the structure of the recited Cl_3 was unknown. In response, Applicants apologize for this typographical error; Cl_2 was intended. (*See, for example*, paragraph [0030] of the Specification.) Appropriate corrections have been made, and Applicants believe this ground for rejection has also been overcome.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 5, and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Terry *et al.* ("Terry"), (Journal of Applied Physics, vol. 85, no.1). Applicants respectfully traverse. Terry is directed to the production of an alkyl-terminated silicon, and there is no mention of a process for treating an organosilicate dielectric layer. The silicon oxide film referred to in Terry section II. (Experiment) was grown and then removed as part of the intermediate step of forming an hydrogen-terminated silicon surface.

In contrast, the present invention is directed to a process for treating an organosilicate dielectric material, such as one used for supporting connective layer in a semiconductor device. The process is used in an attempt to repair the damage that is frequently done to the dielectric layer during the photoresist removal process.

In addition, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 14 to clarify that the material being treated in the claimed process is an organosilicate dielectric material. Applicants believe that these amendments clarify rather than limit claims 1 and 14.

For the reasons provided above, Applicants respectfully suggest that this ground for rejection has been overcome.

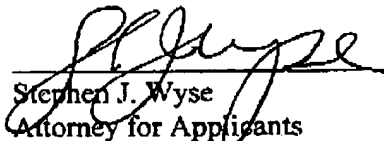
Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 3, 6, 7-9, 11, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Terry in view of Applicant's admission and Weidman (U.S. Patent No. 4,921,321) or Herzig *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,468,890). In response, Applicants traverse the rejection of independent claim 7 for the reasons provided in reference to independent claims 1 and 14, above. The remaining rejected claims are dependent directly or indirectly from one of the independent claims 1, 7, or 14, and are therefore also distinguishable for the same reasons. The prior art fails to show the repair of a damaged organosilicate dielectric layer employing the recited process; the claimed invention becomes apparent only in light of Applicants' full disclosure. For these reasons, Applicants respectfully suggest that this ground for rejection has also been overcome.

Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Stephen J. Wyse, Applicants' attorney, at (972) 732-1001 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible. Please charge any fees in connection with the filing, including the claim fee to Deposit Account No. 50-1065.

Respectfully submitted,

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